
Fact Sheet/ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Thunder Bay North Harbour Sediment Management Options Working Group

Quick Facts:

- The site has approximately 390,000 m³ of sediment contaminated with mercury and wood/pulp fibre spread over 26 hectares following decades of industrial pollution.
- Canada is committed to providing strong support for the restoration and improvement of our valuable freshwater resources like the Great Lakes.
- Thunder Bay is one of 43 areas of concern identified through the 1987 Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks coordinate Canada's and Ontario's implementation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement through the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Ecosystem.
- Canada and Ontario remain committed to working together to engage all levels of government, non-government organizations, First Nations, Metis and the public, in the restoration of the Thunder Bay Area of Concern in Lake Superior.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Transport Canada (TC), the Thunder Bay Port Authority (TBPA) and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) have established a Sediment Management Options Working Group to recommend a preferred option to manage contaminated sediments in the Thunder Bay North Harbour Site. TC and ECCC are co-chairing this working group.
- Invitations to join the working group were extended to organizations including managers or operators of the impacted water lots or associated land-based facilities, current or past neighbouring property owners, and those having regulatory or other interests pertaining to the Thunder Bay North Harbour Site.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q1. Studies to examine contamination at the North Harbour Site in Thunder Bay, Ontario have been completed in the past. Why is more technical work needed?

Potential sediment management options for the Thunder Bay North Harbour Site were developed and consulted on by a sediment technical team in 2014. These options are still valid and will be considered by the Sediment Management Options Working Group. While past sediment studies remain valid, additional work is required to address information gaps and determine the feasibility of the various sediment management strategy options, including any new potential options that may be considered. These studies will provide the additional information needed to recommend a preferred option for managing contamination at the North Harbour Site.

Q2. Does the Thunder Bay Sediment Management Options Working Group have a timeline to determine an option to manage the contaminated sediments at the Thunder Bay North Harbour Site?

It is anticipated that the Thunder Bay Sediment Management Options Working Group will arrive at a recommended option by December 31, 2019. The initial meeting of the working group was held in July 2018. A follow up face-to-face meeting was held in October 2018, with bi-monthly meetings planned thereafter.

Q3. Who is the Thunder Bay Sediment Management Options Working Group making its recommendation to?

The Thunder Bay Sediment Management Options Working Group will make its recommendation in the form of a report to the four key federal and provincial government agencies who established and are participating in the working group. This includes Environment and Climate Change Canada, Transport Canada, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and the Thunder Bay Port Authority.

Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) coordinate Canada's and Ontario's implementation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) through the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Ecosystem (COA). Under this current Agreement, Canada and Ontario are committed to developing a contaminated sediment management strategy for the Thunder Bay North Harbour Site.

Transport Canada is the Thunder Bay North Harbour Site's majority waterlot owner, and the Thunder Bay Port Authority has administration and control of the waterlot.

These key federal and provincial government agencies all play a role in contributing to the development of the contaminated sediment management strategy for the Thunder Bay North Harbour Site.

Q4. Who is going to fund the implementation of the preferred option to manage the contaminated sediments, once identified?

It is premature to determine which parties or organizations will fund the implementation of the preferred option to manage the contaminated sediments, once identified. The Thunder Bay Sediment Management Options Working Group is focused solely on recommending a preferred option in the form of a report, with support from any necessary technical studies to address information gaps.